

Message Text

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70

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00 /031 W

----- 124333

R 031004Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9951

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2788

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, EAID, PO

SUBJ: JUNTA MEMBER REQUESTS USG ECONOMIC AID AND
SUPPORT FOR NEW PORTUGUESE REGIME

REF: LISBON 2782

SUMMARY: DURING RECENT CONVERSATION WITH DCM, GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO, MEMBER OF NATIONAL SALVATION JUNTA, INDICATED PRESSING PORTUGUESE NEED FOR THREE TYPES OF USG AID: A) GENERAL ECONOMIC AID, B) USG ASSISTANCE IN DEALING WITH " COMMUNIST THREAT" AND C) SUPPORT IN AREA OF INTERNAL POLITICS OF PORTUGAL. IN REGARD TO LAST POINT GALVAO DE MELO EXPRESSED HOPE USG WOULD BE WILLING TO INTERVENE PHYSICALLY IN SUPPORT OF REGIME IF NEED BE. END SUMMARY

1. DURING PRIVATE DISCUSSION WITH DCM JULY 1, GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO BROUGHT UP CRITICAL PORTUGUESE NEED FOR USG AID IN FUTURE. DESCRIBING THE PRESENT SITUATION OF PORTUGAL AS BEING EXTREMELY DELICATE POLITICALLY, GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO SAID THAT MOST DELICATE POLITICAL FACTOR IS CRITICAL ECONOMIC SITUATION. HE WAS, THEREFORE, PARTICULARLY ENCOURAGED BY FACT THAT PRESIDENT NIXON HAD INDICATED TO PRESIDENT SPINOLA DURING THEIR MEETING ON AZORES THAT US WAS PREPARED TO PROVIDE MASSIVE ECONOMIC AID IF REQUIRED BY PORTUGAL. PRESIDENT NIXON HAD INDICATED THAT CURRENT AZORES BASE NEGOTIATIONS PROVIDED MECHANISM THROUGH WHICH SUCH AN ECONOMIC AID PROGRAM
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COULD BE ESTABLISHED. THIS ECONOMIC AID WAS MOST

IMPORTANT OF THE THREE TYPES OF AID NEEDED BY PORTUGAL FROM THE UNITED STATES.

2. SECOND ITEM OF ASSISTANCE NEEDED FROM US WAS IN AREA OF DEALING WITH COMMUNIST THREAT. IN THIS CONTEXT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR PORTUGAL TO HAVE THE US AT HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL INDICATE TO USSR THAT PORTUGAL IS WITHIN US SPHERE OF INFLUENCE AND THAT USSR SHOULD KEEP ITS HANDS OFF PORTUGAL. HE SAID THAT, HOWEVER POLITICALLY NAIVE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE MIGHT BE, THEY WERE CERTAINLY CONSCIOUS OF BEING ON SIDE OF WEST AND THAT THIS FEELING WAS ESPECIALLY STRONG WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES.

3. THIRD ARE IN WHICH US SUPPORT WAS NEEDED WAS IN AREA OF INTERNAL POLITICS OF PORTUGAL. GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO WAS SOMEWHAT VAGUE ON WHAT HE HAD IN MIND IN THIS AREA. AT ONE POINT HE APPEARED TO BE ASKING FOR AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING SHOULD IT BE NECESSARY FOR REGIME TO TAKE MORE DRASTIC CONTROL MEASURES TO PREVENT CHAOS OR COMMUNISM. HE STATED THAT, FACED WITH A CHOICE BETWEEN A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP AND CHAOS, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE REGIME WOULD HAVE TO OPT FOR A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP AND THIS WOULD HAVE SUPPORT OF MAJORITY OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT. HE HOPED, OF COURSE, THAT WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY. HE ALSO HOPED IT WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY TO SEEK AMERICAN INTERVENTION, BUT HE FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR PORTUGUESE REGIME TO KNOW THAT THE US WOULD BE WILLING TO INTERVENE, PHYSICALLY, IF NEEDED. DCM SAID THAT AFTER VIET-NAM HE THOUGHT IT HIGHLY RPT HIGHLY UNLIKELY US WOULD BE FOUND INTERVENING PHYSICALLY ANYWHERE. GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO SAID THAT IN RAISING THESE THREE POINTS, THE ECONOMY, THE COMMUNIST THREAT, AND THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION, HE WAS RAISING THESE MATTERS OFFICIALLY. DCM INDICATED THAT HE WOULD, OF COURSE, BE REPORTING ON HIS CONVERSATION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, JUNTA, POLITICAL SITUATION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LISBON02788
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740177-0264
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740777/aaaacoka.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: LISBON 2782
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 MAY 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JUNTA MEMBER REQUESTS USG ECONOMIC AID AND SUPPORT FOR NEW PORTUGUESE REGIME
TAGS: PINT, EAID, PO, US, (DE MELO, GALVAO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005